

The indication during the personal interview that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is gratefully appreciated. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-13, 24, 26, 28, 29 and 31-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Umeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,645,646). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the personal interview, Umeda fails to disclose or suggest a magnetic recording medium wherein a magnetization curve of the magnetic recording medium exhibits a hysteresis loop, and an exchange coupling magnetic field, which is determined from the magnetization curve, is not less than 1 kOe, as recited in independent claims 1, 28, 29 and 31.

As agreed during their personal interview, the prior art of record does not disclose the specific cobalt range of 64% to 84% and the exchange coupling energy of 1 kOe. Moreover, these properties are not inherent in the prior art because the exchange coupling magnetic field is an unexpected result from the cobalt range of 64% to 83%. The exchange coupling magnetic field H_{ex} , which is readable from the hysteresis loops shown in Figs. 4 and 5A, indicates the exchange coupling force between a magnetization-stabilizing layer and a recording layer (see paragraphs [0043] and [0060] in the specification). The exchange coupling energy between the magnetization-stabilizing layer and the recording layer changes depending on the cobalt concentration of the first enhancing layer, which is the ferromagnetic atom-rich layer, as shown, for example, in Fig. 17 and the corresponding paragraph 0095 of the specification. Accordingly, the high exchange coupling magnetic field, which is readable from the hysteresis loops shown in Figs. 4 and 5A, is an unexpected result from the limited range of cobalt concentration in the ferromagnetic atom-rich layer.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-13, 24, 26, 28, 29 and 31-35 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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